

Remarks

Claim 1 was amended to add the limitation "wherein said liquor exchange zone comprises one solid-liquid separation device capable of performing the removal of said impurities from said carboxylic acid slurry and producing said water-wet carboxylic acid cake from said carboxylic acid slurry". Support for this amendment can be found on page 19, lines 18-23 of the disclosure.

In Claim 8, step (c) was amended to remove the optional limitation.

In Claims 13 and 18, the preamble was amended for clarification of the order of steps.

Status of Claims

Claims 1- 22 are pending in the application. Each of these claims is under consideration.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,513,193 to Katzschmann et al. (Katzschmann).

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. MPEP § 2143. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success

must both be found in the prior art, not in applicant's disclosure. *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991).

In that respect, Katzschmann does not teach all the limitations of applicants' invention. The limitations that are not taught by Katzschmann are as follows:

- (1) The solvent water exchange step as in claims 1(b), 8(b), and 18(a).
- (2) Immediately drying the water-wet carboxylic acid cake after the solvent water swap as stated in Claim 13 and Claim 18. However, it should be pointed out that the solvent water swap step could include a water removal step before drying.
- (3) Conducting all these steps in only one zone and/or one device as in Claims 1, 13, and 18.
- (4) The location of the liquor exchange zone or solid liquid displacement step is after the oxidation step as in Claims 1, 13, and 18.
- (5) Counter current washing is not taught as in Claim 1.

Therefore, all the independent claims have at least two elements that are not taught in the cited art, and some claims have as many as five elements that are not taught in the cited art. In addition, there is no reason to modify or combine Katzschmann with other references because of the large differences in the two processes and lack of any teachings to combine.

In light of these arguments, there is no *prima facie* case of obviousness, and applicants respectfully state that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

The application is in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejection(s), remove all rejections, and pass the application to issuance.

Respectfully submitted,

/Steven A Owen/

Eastman Chemical Company
P.O. Box 511
Kingsport, Tennessee 37662
Phone: (423)229-5534
FAX: (423) 229-1239

Steven A. Owen
Registration No. 50,355

10/22/2007

Date